So who really does the donkey work? Comparing the election campaign activity of party members and party supporters.

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Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association, Brighton, UK, 21-23 March, 2016.

ABSTRACT

One of the traditional functions of party members is to campaign on behalf of their party at general elections. However, they are not the only people who volunteer for the job. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that non-members who strongly support a party may do even more than those who actually join it. This paper examines how different actors contributed to the electoral campaigns of six parties at the 2015 UK General Election. It uses new survey data covering not only members of the Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, United Kingdom Independence, Scottish Nationalist, and Green parties but also, firstly, voters who identified themselves as being close to one of those parties but did not formally belong to them and, secondly, those belonging to trade unions officially affiliated to the Labour Party. As well as exploring how much work they do during campaigns, we ask whether the three groups choose different activities and are differently motivated. We find that, at the individual level, party members do more than union members or non-member supporters, and that this is especially true of more intensive forms of activity. We also find that constituency context and political attitudes influence levels of activity, although there is no consistent impact from demographic factors. At the aggregate level, we estimate that the campaign work done by supporters and trade union members may match or even exceed that done by party members.

Introduction

A good ground game may not be everything but it still means something. In a tight race, it may even mean the difference between a party winning and losing an election, especially in the UK, a country carved up into single-member constituencies operating under the plurality rule (Johnston and Pattie, 2003; Karp, Banducci and Bowler, 2008; Fisher and Denver, 2009; André and Depauw, 2015; Johnston, Pattie, Scully and Cutts, 2016). But if 'boots on the ground' are at least potentially important, who is it who wears them and why? And what exactly do they do once they've donned them?

The answer to the first question has traditionally been obvious: grassroots members of political parties. The answer to the second no less so: delivering leaflets, putting up posters, holding meetings and canvassing voters and then getting them to the polling stations. But what if all this no longer holds? Given (a) the almost ubiquitous decline in the number of people joining political parties (van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke, 2012), (b) those parties' more or possibly less (Faucher, 2015) reluctant accommodation to that decline, and (c) the simultaneous rise of new communication technologies, there is good reason to suppose things might have changed. There is also some evidence to suggest that they have.

A recent British study, using data collected in 2010 from parties' election agents, found, for instance, that 'although members clearly still matter, they are not the only source of voluntary activity, especially in election campaigns' – so much so that '[o]ver three quarters of constituency (district level) campaigns in Britain recruited supporters in 2010 and on average, supporters engaged in around two thirds of the activities of members' (Fisher, Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2014: 91-2; see also Scarrow, 2015: 103-109 and, on Australia, Gauja and Jackson 2015: 9-12). And while another recent study discovered that the British lag some way behind their American cousins when it comes to contacting voters online, it also noted that the potential is clearly there (Aldrich et al., forthcoming). It is more than possible, of course, that these two things are related in the sense of new technologies enabling and perhaps even encouraging campaigning activity by

people who are not necessarily members of the party with which they identify (see Gibson, 2015).

In a recent paper (Bale, Webb and Poletti, 2015), we made use of surveys of the members of six British political parties conducted just after the 2015 general election not just to detail what they did for their parties during the campaign but also to explain what drove them to do what they did. At the same time as conducting those surveys, however, we also surveyed some of the same parties' strongest supporters – people who felt a strong sense of partisan identification but who were not themselves members – as well as members of trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party. Our aim in this paper is, firstly, to compare the scope, frequency and intensity of the campaigning activities of the three groups and, secondly, to see whether they are similarly or differently motivated. In general, we find that at the individual level party members are much more likely to campaign for their preferred parties than either union members or non-member supporters, and that this is especially true of the more intensive forms of activity. We also find that constituency context (ie, the marginality of a seat) and the political attitudes of respondents (especially social liberalism, postmaterialism and feelings about the EU) influence levels of activity, although demographic factors bear no consistent connection with it. This notwithstanding, however, the considerably greater numbers of non-member supporters and trade unionists in the population mean that the sum of campaign activity undertaken by these groups may match or even outweigh that of party members at the aggregate level.

Members and supporters at elections: What we know

The most recent and the most detailed study so far of the contributions made at elections by both members and supporters of British political parties is the research carried out, using surveys of constituency parties at the 2010 election, by Fisher, Fieldhouse and Cutts (2014) – work which builds both upon the work of Denver, Hands and Fisher (2001), and on the seminal work on British party members of Paul Whiteley and Patrick Seyd. The main argument put forward by Fisher, Fieldhouse and Cutts (2014: 79) is that 'many of the roles of members outlined by Seyd and Whiteley may now not be their exclusive preserve', not

least because 'supporters can become involved in election campaigns, assisting with the mobilization of the vote and political communication.' They also note (2014: 77) that, in particular, 'Labour's party structure, which includes affiliated trade unions, suggests that an exclusive focus on formal individual members could be missing something.' Observing that in 2010 '78 per cent of local Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties recruited some supporters to help with the campaign' (Fisher, Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2014: 81), they asked four key questions (the first and the last two being of most interest to us), namely:

1. To what extent do supporters engage in similar activities to those of members?

2. To what extent is supporter activity a function of existing active local parties?

3. Are the levels [of] supporter activity predicted in a similar way to levels of member activity?

4. Do supporters make an independent positive contribution to constituency campaigns?

When it came to the first question, they found the following (p.83):

> On the one hand, it is clear that to some extent, party supporters engaged to varying degrees in the same activities as party members, and in the case of delivering leaflets (the activity in which all parties made most effort), to a virtually identical degree. Equally, supporters were quite likely to staff polling stations relative to members, and were perhaps surprisingly likely to be involved at the campaign headquarters, despite not being formal members. However, in respect of other activities where voters were contacted either on the doorstep or by telephone, supporters were less likely to be involved than members.

They concluded (2014: 84) that, 'on average, [supporters put in] around two thirds of the effort' and that this was plainly 'nontrivial'.

As to whether the levels [of] supporter activity could be predicted in a similar way to levels of member activity, they found that the prospect of victory or

possible defeat in a seat prompted more activity from both members and supporters (Fisher, Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2014: 86). When, however, it came to demographics (which they examined at a constituency level, note, not at an individual level), they found that there was no consistent pattern across members and supporters, or across the various parties. For the Conservatives, the proportions of graduates and owner occupiers in a constituency predicted the campaign input of members, while the proportion of manual workers influenced the activity of supporters. For Labour, an ethnically diverse population was a significant predictor of member activity, but population density correlated with supporter activity. Several features of the constituency's demographic profile (an ethnically diverse population and proportions of graduates, owner-occupiers and council or housing association tenants) impacted on the campaign activity of Liberal Democrat supporters – but none of these mattered to the party's members (ibid., 86-89). They also picked up differences due to what they refer to as 'political' drivers, by which they meant the presence of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) candidates (which boosted Conservative supporter activity but not member activity) or women candidates (which correlated positively with Labour members' activism, but not with that of their supporters).

To these findings, we can now add our own on the campaign activities of party members at the 2015 election – data gathered not at the level of constituency parties but at the level of the individual members and supporters themselves. In an earlier study, we used the party members' data to test a number of hypotheses, some of which are derived from Seyd and Whiteley's 'general incentives' model (Bale, Webb & Poletti 2015). Along with certain attitudinal, demographic and constituency variables, the general incentives factors largely performed well in explaining the activism of British party members; even if some elements of it (such as altruistic incentives and the costs of activism) appeared unimportant, others (social norms, expressive and selective incentives) were consistently significant. The personal resources inherent in socio-economic status were generally unimportant, although in several parties, age had a (curvilinear) impact, and there was also an association between education and participation. Various ideological influences also impacted on campaign

activism. In particular, social liberalism and, to a lesser extent, post-materialism were consistently positive drivers of campaign activism among party members, as were attitudes towards EU membership – at least for those who have definite opinions on the issue. In addition, a member's perceptions of left-right proximity from his or her local party could significantly enhance (or depress) that member's willingness to engage in campaign activity. The local constituency context was also an influence on activism: a close contest made members more active.

In principle, we would like in this paper to test similar models on non-member supporters and members of trade unions that are affiliated to the Labour Party. However, it is not possible to run identical models for these groups since many of the survey questions on which the general incentives models are based – relating to reasons for joining parties, for instance – are plainly irrelevant to those who are not party members. We are perforce obliged to test somewhat more limited models of activism which can be applied equally to all three groups of actors. These models incorporate demographic, ideological and constituency factors, but exclude the general incentives reasons for joining parties.

Given the above, then, we aim in this paper to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Individuals who are members of political parties will, on average, do more for those parties during election campaigns than will individuals who strongly support those same parties but are not members of them.

H2: Individuals who are members of trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party will, on average, do more for the parties they voted for in 2015 during election campaign than will individuals who strongly support those same parties but are not members of them, but they will do less than formal members of those parties. We expect union members to fall into this intermediate position because, as people who participate in civil society associations, they get the chance to develop the skills relevant to political participation (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995); however, they are not all individual party members, and so as

a group it would be surprising if they showed the same degree of commitment to party activity as full individual party members.

H3: Notwithstanding the greater propensity of party members to undertake campaign activity than non-member supporters or affiliated trade unionists at the individual level, we would estimate that the aggregate-level input of the latter two groups may match or exceed that of party members because of their greater numbers in the adult population.

H4: Differences in campaigning effort between party members, party supporters and members of affiliated trade unions will vary according to the activities in question: members will be even more likely than others to engage in 'high-intensity' and 'medium-intensity' activities; differences with regard to 'low-intensity' campaign activities will be less pronounced.

H5: The demographic and attitudinal correlates of campaign activism among parties' strongest supporters and members of affiliated trade unions will be the same as, or at least similar to, the correlates of campaign activism among parties' members.

H6: Party members, strong supporters of political parties and members of Labour-affiliated trade unions will all be more likely to involve themselves in campaign activities when they live in constituencies which are likely to produce closer races.

Patterns of campaign activism among party members, supporters and trade unionists

Table 1 reports some basic descriptive statistics relating to the demographic and political profile of our samples, comparing party members, non-member partisan identifiers ('supporters'), and members of Labour-affiliated trade unions. We observe few differences across these three sets of respondents in terms of their age profiles, although there is a slight tendency for union members to be a little older than party members and partisans; this is most marked in the case of Green voters. It is also apparent that party members and

trade unionists are more likely to be male than their counterparts among wider supporter networks; indeed, the differences are quite sharp in all cases. The only groups that show female majorities are Green and Liberal Democrat partisan supporters. Party members are, on average, much more likely to be educated to graduate level than non-member partisans or trade union supporters, with Labour, Liberal Democrat and Greens being the most highly educated in these terms, and Ukippers the least. Party members are also generally more likely to be from non-manual occupational grades than other supporters and trade unionists; Liberal Democrats and Conservatives are most middle-class in this sense, and once again, Ukippers are the least. In terms of subjective self-location on the left-right scale, it is striking but perhaps not too surprising, that party members are, without exception, more radical (in the sense of being closer to one end of the ideological spectrum or the other) than either their supporter or trade unionist counterparts: that is, Labour, Green, SNP and even Liberal Democrat members all regard themselves as more left–wing than their respective parties' partisans and trade unionist supporters, while Conservative and UKIP members are both further right than their equivalents. The relative ordering of mean scores for the parties is identical within each of samples: from left to right it runs from Green to Labour, SNP, Liberal Democrat, UKIP and Conservative.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

A clear indication of the way in which party membership, partisan identification and trade union membership can help mobilize electoral support is provided by reviewing the evidence on voting behaviour in 2015. First, Table 2 shows the effect of partisan identification by reporting the percentages of those voting loyally for the party with which they habitually identify; the data come from the British Election Study rather than our party membership survey because the former enables us to see the effect of the strength of partisan sentiment: it is quite clear that in the case of each one of the parties, the stronger a respondent professes his or her partisan identity to be, the more likely they are to vote loyally for 'their' party in the actual election. Our own sample of non-member supporters of parties consists of only those with very strong partisan identities.

Table 3 confirms generally similar rates of electoral loyalty in our data, but also reveals that – with the exception of the SNP – party members are even more loyal to their party than non-member partisans. Finally, Table 3 shows how membership of an affiliated trade union still helps Labour in particular, although the relationship is far from perfect; nearly one in two union members voted for Labour in 2015, although each of the other parties won non-trivial levels of support from union members as well, especially UKIP and the Tories.

TABLES 2 & 3 ABOUT HERE

These figures point towards some kind of general mobilizational advantage for parties in having members and strong partisan identifiers, and a specific Labour Party mobilizational advantage in having affiliated union members as well. But what are the mobilizational efforts that each of these groups of actors undertake on behalf of their parties? Table 4 addresses this question by revealing the range and number of campaign activities that they undertook in the run-up to the election in May 2015. The most striking feature of this table is that, as one might expect, full members of political parties are far more active on average than their counterparts among non-member supporters or trade unionists. The summary campaign activism index scores for the party member samples range from a low of 2.15 forms of activity undertaken during the campaign by Conservative members to 3.02 forms of activity undertaken by SNP members; by contrast, respective figures for supporters are 0.26 to 0.81, and for trade unionists they are 0.26 to 1.06. The overall activism index average for party members is 2.47, compared to just 0.51 for supporters and 0.81 for union members. Thus, we can confidently conclude that party members remain vitally important campaign resources for political parties, who are much more readily mobilized on behalf of their candidates during elections. This clearly confirms H1 (that members will be more active than supporters). Furthermore, we see that overall, affiliated trade union members are more active than supporters, but not as active as party members, which confirms H2. It is interesting to observe that the difference between supporters and union members in activism index scores is most pronounced in the case of those who worked on behalf of the Labour Party: while the respective scores for these groups were 0.51 and 0.81 overall, for those

who were active on behalf of Labour the scores were 0.48 and 1.13 – a much larger gap than for any other party.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

However, while this is undeniably true when we compare the relative rates of activity undertaken by these three groups, it must be borne in mind that the story may be quite different when we consider their overall impact on election campaigns at the aggregate level. That is, we have to take into account the fact that in Britain, as is the case throughout Europe (see Hooghe and Kern, 2015: 953) there are very different absolute numbers of party members, non-member supporters and affiliated trade union members. Given that there are considerably more of each of the latter two groups than there are party members in the adult population, it is quite conceivable that their overall contribution to campaign activity might rival that of party members. A few simple calculations suffices to provide us with estimates of the overall input of each group in the 2015 general election.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Table 5 estimates the numbers of each of these groups that the parties were able to draw on as potential campaign resources in the run-up to the election. The number of members that each party had in May 2015 (or as close as possible to that time) is taken from Keen (2015). The number of non-member supporters each party might have been able to call upon is estimated by taking the percentages of the overall BES post-election sample who are 'very strong' partisans for each party, and then calculating what this would amount to in terms of the UK's 45,325,078 registered electors in 2015. The numbers of trade unionists supporting each party are calculated by allocating the 4,238,492 members of trade unions affiliated to Labour in 2015 on a pro rata basis according to the levels of voting support reported in Table 3 (final row). Given that there are more than 8.8 million very strong partisans in the electorate (just under a fifth), compared to around 4 million members of affiliated unions and just 600,000 party members, it is obvious that the parties might enjoy

considerable activist input at the aggregate level from the first two of these groups, notwithstanding their much lower rates of campaign activity at the individual level.

Just how much is shown in Table 6, which multiplies the mean score on the campaign activism index by the number of people in each group. The figures can be interpreted as estimates of the total number of campaign activities performed by party members, non-member partisans, and trade union supporters respectively on behalf of 'their' parties. Regarded in this way, it is apparent that non-member supporters probably contributed most activity overall during the 2015 election campaign, having performed a total of 4.5 million activities altogether. Members of affiliated trade unions came next, having performed more than 3.3 million campaign activities, while party members came last, with just under 1.5 million activities. Labour in particular seems to have benefited from the input of non-member supporters and (unsurprisingly) affiliated trade union members. This confirms one of the major claims made by Fisher and his colleagues about the importance of non-members for campaigning activity, and also confirms our own H3: 'Notwithstanding the greater propensity of party members to undertake campaign activity than non-member supporters or affiliated trade unionists at the individual level, we would estimate that the aggregate-level input of the latter two groups may match or exceed that of party members because of their greater numbers in the adult population.'

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

Of course, none of this takes account of the specific nature of different types of campaign activity: close inspection of the pattern of the findings reported in Table 4 reveals that the members are at a particular premium when it comes to the more intensive forms of campaign activity such as canvassing and delivering leaflets. For instance, whereas party members were only 2.5 times more likely than non-member supporters to have 'liked' something for their party on Facebook, they were 12 times more likely to have canvassed and 15 times more likely to have delivered campaign leaflets. In order to look at this more systematically, we have distinguished between low-intensity, medium-intensity

and high-intensity activities, and have included three lines in Table 4 which summarize participation in these terms. In terms of time and effort, our classification of low intensity activities includes 'liking something by party/candidate on Facebook', 'Tweeting/re-tweeting something by party or candidate' and 'displaying election poster in window'; our medium-intensity activity category includes 'delivering leaflets' and 'attending public meetings or hustings'; while our high intensity category includes 'canvassing face to face or by phone' and 'standing as a candidate (parliamentary or local councillor)'. The general impression does not change. For instance, whereas party members were about 2.5 times more likely to have participated in low intensity activity than trade unionists or party supporters, they were respectively 3 and 6 times more likely to have participated in medium intensity activity, and (almost) 4 and 12 times more likely to have participated in high intensity activity. Clearly, then, the higher the 'cost' to the individual in terms of time and effort, the more likely that party members rather than non-members or trade unionists will deliver campaign activity on behalf of their parties. This offers broad confirmation of H4, that the gap between members and supporters or trade unionists will grow with the intensity of campaign activity. Once again, moreover, we note that the relative ordering of the three groups places trade union members above non-member supporters, but below party members.

In brief, while this analysis confirms the 'multi-speed membership' idea that adherents who are more loosely connected to parties than full members may be valuable as human resources in election campaigns, it also points to the continuing centrality of the formal membership for core activities which are vital to electoral mobilization.

Modelling activism: Are members and non-members motivated by the same factors?

We now turn to the question of what influences campaign activism. In order to do this we create models of activism that enable us to compare and contrast the factors that motivate and influence members, supporters and trade unionist to campaign during elections. Specifically, we look at socio-demographic (H5), ideological (H5) and constituency marginality (H6) factors.

Hypothesis 5 states that 'The demographic and attitudinal correlates of campaign activism among parties' strongest supporters and members of affiliated trade unions will be the same as, or at least similar to, the correlates of campaign activism among parties' members.' On the one hand, the *socio-demographic* determinants for activism are measured by looking at gender, educational qualification level, social grade, and age. Note that in addition to a straightforward linear age effect, we also test for a curvilinear effect, following the findings of previous research on political participation; Milbrath (1965: 135) suggests that older respondents are generally more participative up to a certain age, past which their activism declines again. [i] Our assumptions are that the most active during the campaign will be those who are higher educated, male, of high social grade, older up to their forties or fifties, after which age activism will decline again.

Ideological determinants of activism are measured using various attitudinal scales which tap ideological dimensions widely recognised as salient features of contemporary British politics:

(a) Left/right ideological proximity is measured by taking the absolute difference between respondents' left-right self-position and that which they ascribe to their national party (both measured on a 0=left to 10=right scale). The measure of proximity runs from zero (maximum ideological proximity; i.e. no distance between respondent and party) to 10 (minimum ideological proximity; i.e. maximum distance between respondent and party). We assume that those who perceive a higher distance between themselves and their party will be less willing to campaign on behalf of it.

(b) Social liberalism-authoritarianism is measured by a standard additive index running from zero (representing the liberal end of the scale) to 10 (representing the authoritarian end) (Heath et al 1993). This is highly reliable.[ii] Our assumption here is that respondents who are more socially liberal will be more likely to participate in campaigns, since liberalism places greater emphasis on democratic engagement as a civic right and a preferred

value that maximises liberty and enhances political knowledge on the part of citizens (Howarth 2007).

(c) Post-materialism is measured through an index that uses a classic Inglehartian measurement based on four policy objectives about which respondents are invited to express their preferences[iii]. Respondents selecting the two materialist options as their first and second priorities are designated materialists (coded as 1), while those selecting the two post-materialist options are designated as post-materialists (coded as 3), and everyone else is deemed to be attitudinally 'mixed' on this dimension of belief (coded as 2). Since post-materialist values emphasise, among other things, self-actualization and self-expression through democratic participation we would expect to find a positive relationship between post-materialist orientation and campaign activism.

(d) Attitude towards Britain's relationship with Europe is measured by a question about the referendum on UK membership of the EU: 'If there were a referendum on EU membership prior to the next general election, how would respondents vote?' If they indicated a preference for leaving or staying in regardless of any renegotiated terms of membership that the government might achieve, they were coded as 1; if they indicated that their decision would depend on the outcome of negotiations they were coded as 0. This follows the assumption that those with less conditional opinions on EU membership will be more likely to participate across a wider range of campaign activities.

Hypothesis 6 states that 'Party members, strong supporters of political parties and members of Labour-affiliated trade unions will all be more likely to involve themselves in campaign activities when they live in constituencies which are likely to produce closer races.' In order to determine whether a race is close we should look at *marginality*, measured using the winning majority of the local MP in 2010, with an index that runs from zero (0% majority) to 10 (100% majority).[iv]

Our main dependent variable is the summary campaign activism index score used above (running from zero to seven and based on the number of different activities carried out), which aims to capture the *breadth* of party members' political participation at the 2015 general election.[v] We treat it as a count variable and run Negative Binomial regression analysis on it, the most appropriate statistical analysis tool for count outcome (Long 1997).[vi]

In table 7 we run equivalent models for members, party partisans and trade unionists that incorporate these demographics (H5), ideological factors (H5), and constituency marginality (H6). In each of these models, using SNP as the reference category, we include dummy variables for the party to which respondents belong (for party members), strongly identify with (for party supporters) or voted for in 2015 (for trade unionists), in order to control for party effects. Table 7 reports the Incident-Rate Ratio coefficients (IRRs), which are the key parameter estimates for negative binomial regression.[vii]

TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE

We can see in Table 7 that there are few if any demographic characteristics that significantly influence campaign activism across the three groups of respondent; to this extent they are somewhat similar. However, where there are significant demographic effects, they differ across the groups. For party members (Model 1) the relevant characteristic is age. On average, and controlling for all other variables in the model, the older members are, the wider the range of campaign activities they participate in. This is true, however, until their forties, when their participation in campaign activities starts to decline. For party supporters (Model 2), however, it is gender and education that make the difference, rather than age. Higher educated respondents and females tends to participate more than lower educated respondents and men. Demographic characteristics seem to be of no importance at all for members of the trade unions affiliated to the Labour party (Model 3). Note that the general inconsistency of demographic effects is similar to that reported in the constituency-levels analysis of Fisher et al (2014).

When we look at ideology, we can see that all three groups participate more during the electoral campaign when they have clearer views on the EU and have more libertarian values. This is particularly the case for trade unionists. Being more post-materialist than materialist seems to matter for party members as well as party supporters, but not for trade unionists. Finally, the perceived distance between the respondent's left-right self-placement and 'their' national party matters both for party members and party supporters, although in different directions: the greater the distance, the lower the participation of party members in the campaign, which makes intuitive sense and is as we expected; somewhat paradoxically, however, greater perceived ideological distance actually seems to spur non-member supporters to a wider range of participatory activities. Overall, the findings pertaining to demographic and attitudinal influences suggest that it is rather too simplistic to assert that they are broadly similar across party members, supporters and trade unionists; while there are some areas of overlap (especially in respect of social liberalism, post-materialism and European integration), the picture is too complex for us to accept H5.

When we look at the marginality of the constituency respondents live in, we see that the safer a seat is, the less inclined both party members and party supporters are to participate in the campaign. However, marginality does not make a significant difference to the campaign involvement of trade unionists. Overall, there is clearly much evidence to support H6, although it is not entirely confirmed.

Finally, everything else being equal, members and non-members of every party participated in significantly fewer activities than members and supporters of the SNP. The gap with SNP participation becomes particularly evident for Liberal Democrat and Conservative party supporters, and, to a lesser extent, for Labour and UKIP supporters. Similar differences between parties are found for trade unionists, with the exception that those who voted Labour and UKIP in 2015 participated in the campaign as much as those who voted for SNP. Although

none of the models display a particularly high fit[viii], the fit of the trade unionists' model (model 3) is comparatively higher than the fit of party supporters (model 2), which, in turn, is comparatively higher than the fit of party members (model 1).

By way of summarizing our findings pertaining to hypotheses 5 and 6, it may be useful to tot up the points of difference across the three groups of respondent. Underlying both hypotheses is the implication that we should find parameter estimates that are similarly signed and of similar statistical significance. The evidence of Table 7 shows that this is not really the case; while it is true that some of the estimates are consistent in significance and direction across all models, a relatively high number are not. In all, there are 16 estimates in each of models 1-3, including the party effects; some nine of these show differentiation, either in terms of significance or direction of relationship (or both). We have highlighted these in the Table for ease of identification. Close examination reveals that more often than not the outlier group is the trade unionist one. If we only consider party members and party supporters, the main difference between the two groups is demographic, whereas, with the exception of left-right distance, similar ideological factors drive the two groups to participate. Specifically, being less authoritarian, more post-materialist and having clear views on the EU all impel respondents to involve themselves in campaign activities. It is also evident that the main area of difference across the groups is demography: there is far greater consistency of attitudinal and constituency effects.

Conclusion

To summarise the major findings of this paper, we have seen that, at the *individual level*, members of political parties are far more likely to engage in campaign activity on behalf of their preferred party than either non-member supporters or members of affiliated trade unions are; however, union members generally do more campaign work than non-member supporters. The size of the activism gap varies according to the intensity of the form of activity; the more intensive an activity is in terms of time and effort implied, the greater the input

of party members relative to either trade union members or (especially) non-member supporters. This notwithstanding, at the *aggregate level* the overall impact of campaign work undertaken by non-member supporters and affiliated union members might very well be as great (or even greater) as that of party members, given the far larger number of people falling into the former two population groups. In trying to understand what influences people in each of these groups to involve themselves in election campaign activity, we have found that the constituency context is likely to be important; at least for party members and supporters, it is the case that the closer the constituency race is expected to be, the more likely that they will be active. We have also seen that political attitudes are generally influential: social liberalism, post-materialism and clear-cut feelings about the EU all incline people to be more active in election campaigns; perceived left-right distance from the national party leadership also inclines party members to participate, though not non-member supporters or union members. Beyond this, there is no clear single (or even predominant) pattern of social background influence flowing from demographic status.

Unsurprisingly, given that actually joining a party is likely to be an expression of greater commitment to it, an individual member is likely to do more than an individual supporter. However, given how many more supporters than members parties have, the contribution of the former may well outweigh the contribution of the latter – something that may remain true even when taking into account the fact that members are significantly more prepared to interact with other voters (for example, through canvassing) than supporters. Moreover, those supporters who do things for their preferred parties at election time are often motivated by many of the same things that motivate those members who help out too. Members, then, to borrow from Fisher and his colleagues are not the only fruit – and nor is comparing members with supporters (and indeed, in Labour's case, members of affiliated trade unions) like comparing apples and oranges.

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Notes

[i] These items are coded as follows: Gender: 1 (male), 2 (female); Education: 1 (No qualifications), 2 (Junior vocational qualifications), 3 (CSE), 4 (GCSE, O levels, etc.), 5 (A levels/ Scottish highers), 6 (Higher vocational qualifications), 7 (Graduate); Social grade: 1 (C2DE – ie, manual employee) 2 (ABC1 –ie, non-manual employee); Age: Respondent's age in years, divided by 10 to ease interpretation (change for 10-year difference shown), so that it now runs from 0 to 10; Age squared.

[ii] The individual items from which the Liberty-Authority scale is constructed as follows: "Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional values"; "People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences"; "For some crimes the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence"; "Schools should teach children to obey authority"; "Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards". Responses are coded so that 1 is the most socially liberal option and 5 the most socially authoritarian option. The resulting scores are normalized and multiplied by 10 so that the final scale runs from 0 to 10. Cronbach's alpha for these five items in the party membeship data = .846; in the non-member supporters data it = .837; and for the trade union members data it = .849, which indicates consistently high levels of scale reliability across the three datasets.

[iii] Two items (maintaining order in the nation, and fighting unemployment) constitute materialist preferences and two items (giving people more say in important government decisions, and protecting freedom of speech) constitute post-materialist preferences.

[iv] The winning majority has been divided by 10 to make a change of 1 unit more readily interpretable compared to other independent variables in the models.

[v] The seven factors that count towards the dependent variable are: liking a party or candidate on Facebook, Tweeting something positive for or about the party or candidate, displaying a poster, delivering party leaflets, attending public meetings, canvassing voters, and standing as a candidate. "Other" has been excluded. Note that we considered whether a weighted dependent variable taking into account different costs of activities could be a better choice. However, since results were extremely similar to those shown and it was not completely clear what it would mean to apply weights to the number of different activities carried out in campaign, we decided to present results for the unweighted variable.

[vi] Count variables can be modelled using either negative binomial regression or Poisson regression. They both have the same mean structure. The difference between the two is that negative binomial also has an extra parameter (alpha) to model over-dispersion (i.e. when the conditional variance exceeds the conditional mean). In our case, negative binomial regression was deemed more appropriate due to a significant overdispersion in the political participation index. The likelihood ratio test (party members: 424.36, 1df, $p<0.001$; party supporters: 46.86, 1 df, $p<0.001$; trade unionists: 249.83, 1 df, $p<0.001$) comparing the full negative binomial model to a Poisson model, shows that alpha is non-zero (Long & Freese, 2006). Working with logistic regression types, for ease of interpretation of exp(B) all variables excluding demographics/resources have been recoded from 0 to 10.

[vii] Similar to odds ratios in binomial logistic regression, IRRs are the exponentials of the negative binomial regression coefficients (exp (b)) and they are often used for ease of interpretation. The negative binomial regression coefficients have an additive effect in the log(y) scale, while the incident-rate ratio coefficients (IRR) have a multiplicative effect in the y scale.

[viii] The pseudo R-squared used in this model is McFadden's Adjusted R^2, a measure that shows improvement from the null model to the fitted model. Excellent fit is generally considered to be between 0.2-0.4.

TABLES

Table 1: Social and political characteristics of British political party members, 2015.

Attribute		Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	SNP	Total
Mean age	M	54	51	51	58	42	49	51
	S	57	52	50	56	41	52	52
	TU	56	54	55	57	50	53	54
% male	M	71.2	61.6	68.5	75.9	57.5	56.4	65.0
	S	51.6	49.6	43.2	55.9	35.9	51.5	48.1
	TU	61.9	61.0	54.1	78.2	59.7	61.9	62.9
% graduates	M	37.9	56.3	55.8	23.1	56.4	41.7	45.4
	S	25.3	29.8	44.6	13.3	48.5	28.4	31.3
	TU	15.9	36.5	34.5	10.6	52.1	34.0	30.8
% ABC1	M	74.6	69.7	76.0	59.9	65.2	61.9	68.2
	S	68.6	51.9	67.5	43.0	55.9	46.9	55.7
	TU	43.7	53.2	58.2	30.6	58.0	50.5	49.2
Mean left-right	M	7.76	2.39	4.10	7.34	1.90	2.96	4.44
	S	7.53	2.97	4.40	6.77	2.40	3.65	4.66
	TU	6.90	2.87	4.34	6.03	2.11	3.00	4.00
N	M	1193	1180	730	785	845	963	5696
	S	1142	1136	1004	1071	1029	996	6378
	TU	252	774	122	216	119	97	1580

Notes: M: Members, S: Supporters. Left-right (self-location) = mean *self*-placement on a scale running from 0 (left-wing) to 10 (right-wing).

Table 2: Partisan identification by vote, 2015

Party Id.	Very strong	Quite Strong	Not very Strong	Number
Conservative	95.6	87.9	52.4	6446
Labour	94.6	83.7	53.4	6658
Liberal Dem.	66.7	54.4	41.9	1101
UKIP	78.4	49.6	20.8	1450
Green	72.3	54.7	17.2	587
SNP	92.3	68.6	29.2	1746

Note: Each cell reports the percentage of partisan identifiers voting loyally for 'their' party at the 2015 general election. Data source: BES panel study, (post-election) wave 6.

Table 3: Voting preference by party membership, partisan identity, and trade union membership, 2015

	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	SNP	Total
Members	90.5	90.7	82.7	88.0	79.1	91.6	87.7
Supporters	85.5	86.0	66.9	85.7	66.2	97.0	81.5
Trade unionists	15.5	47.5	7.5	13.3	7.3	6.0	97.1

Note: Members = percentage of party members voting loyally for 'their' party in 2015; Supporters = percentage of non-member party supporters (ie, very strong identifiers) voting loyally for 'their' party in 2015; Trade unionists = percentage of members of unions affiliated to the Labour Party voting for each of the parties in 2015. Data Sources: UK Party Membership Survey 2015, Trade Union Members Survey 2015.

Table 4: Which of the following things did you do for the party during the 2015 election campaign?

Activity		**Con**	**Lab**	**LD**	**UKIP**	**Green**	**SNP**	**Total**
'Liked' something by	M	39.6	51.1	47.4	44.2	67.6	72.7	53.4
party/candidate on	S	10.2	18.8	14.8	17.2	35.5	31.2	21.0
Facebook	TU	9.5	26.9	11.5	14.8	26.9	32.0	21.4
Tweeted/re-tweeted	M	26.0	36.9	31.1	22.9	45.7	48.6	35.2
something by party	S	3.4	7.8	7.8	4.4	18.5	10.4	8.6
or candidate	TU	3.6	15.1	8.2	4.2	15.1	12.4	10.8
Displayed election	M	29.6	51.2	37.8	42.9	45.1	67.7	45.7
poster in window	S	2.5	10.7	6.0	8.1	9.5	21.1	9.5
	TU	3.2	23.9	6.6	7.9	16.8	27.8	16.4
Low intensity	*M*	*57.4*	*75.3*	*67.4*	*65.0*	*80.6*	*87.6*	*72.0*
Activities	*S*	*13.5*	*26.5*	*21.9*	*23.1*	*43.1*	*41.9*	*28.0*
(at least one)	*TU*	*11.9*	*40.7*	*18.0*	*20.8*	*37.8*	*45.4*	*30.5*
Delivered leaflets	M	43.5	42.5	45.9	38.3	28.8	35.4	39.4
	S	2.4	3.0	3.8	1.6	2.4	2.6	2.6
	TU	2.0	14.5	4.1	3.7	6.7	5.2	9.2
Attended public	M	31.3	31.4	28.2	40.5	27.3	49.0	34.6
meeting or hustings	S	4.2	4.8	6.8	3.4	8.7	12.6	6.6
	TU	5.2	16.9	4.9	8.3	13.4	19.6	12.9
Medium intensity	*M*	*52.5*	*52.2*	*52.8*	*51.1*	*38.5*	*56.2*	*51.0*
Activities	*S*	*6.3*	*7.0*	*9.4*	*4.3*	*10.3*	*14.3*	*8.5*
(at least one)	*TU*	*7.1*	*22.7*	*7.4*	*9.3*	*16.8*	*19.6*	*16.3*
Canvassed face to face	M	36.5	35.7	32.6	26.1	19.1	28.2	30.4
or by phone	S	1.6	2.4	2.2	2.1	4.0	2.4	2.4
	TU	2.0	12.7	0.8	1.9	9.2	9.3	8.0
Stood as candidate	M	9.1	7.0	15.1	13.0	10.2	0.2	8.6
(parliamentary or	S	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.3
local councillor)	TU	0.4	3.5	0.8	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.0
High intensity	*M*	*38.0*	*37.0*	*36.0*	*30.0*	*23.7*	*28.2*	*32.6*
Activities	*S*	*2.0*	*2.4*	*2.8*	*2.3*	*4.1*	*2.4*	*2.7*
(at least one)	*TU*	*2.0*	*13.2*	*1.6*	*1.9*	*10.1*	*9.3*	*8.4*
Activism Index – M		2.15	2.56	2.38	2.28	2.43	3.02	2.47
Activism Index – S		0.25	0.48	0.42	0.37	0.79	0.80	0.51
Activism Index – TU		0.26	1.13	0.37	0.41	0.91	1.06	0.81
Number – M		1193	1180	730	785	845	963	5696
- S		1142	1136	1004	1070	1029	996	6337
- TU		252	774	122	216	119	97	1580

Note: All activities figures are percentages. Campaign activism index is based on an additive scale that runs from 0 (no activity during the election campaign) to 7 (maximal activity during the campaign, excluding "other"). M= members; S=supporters; TU= trade unionists.

Table 5: Estimates of national totals of party members, very strong partisans, and members of Labour-affiliated unions, 2015.

	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	SNP	Total
Members	150000	188000	51000	42000	61000	110000	602000
Supporters	3061993	3883464	446623	636577	165192	659054	8852903
T/Unionists	656966	2013284	317887	563719	309410	254310	4115576

Note: 'Members' = number of political party members at time of May 2015 general elections, or as near as possible thereof. 'Supporters' = projected numbers of non-members who are 'very strong' partisan identifiers for each party, based on BES 2015 Internet Panel (post-election), Wave 6.0; the number of party members is then subtracted from this figure in order to avoid double-counting, given that most party members are also highly likely to designate themselves 'very strong' partisan identifiers. 'Trade unionists' = projected number of members of affiliated trade union members that would have voted for each party, based on our Trade Union Members Survey, 2015.[viii]

Table 6: Mean number of campaign activities, weighted by size of groups

	Con.	Labour	LibDem	UKIP	Green	SNP	Total
Members	322500	481280	121380	95760	148230	332200	1486940
Supporters	765498	1864063	187582	235533	130502	527243	4514981
T/Unionists	170811	2275010	117618	231125	281563	269569	3333617

Note: Each figure is the mean number of campaign activities reported by each group (as indicated by the campaign activism index in Table 4), multiplied by the estimated number of people the group (as reported in Table 5). The figures may therefore be interpreted as the overall number of campaign activities conducted by each group.

Table 7. Explanatory models for Political Participation Breadth during the Electoral Campaign

DV=Party Activism	(1) M	(2) S	(3) TU

Demographics			
Female	1.011	1.148***	0.850
	(0.023)	(0.056)	(0.093)
Education level (Qualification)	0.989	1.035**	1.046
	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.033)
ABC1 (vs. CD2E)	0.958	1.006	1.143
	(0.025)	(0.054)	(0.127)
Age	1.261***	0.874	0.893
	(0.051)	(0.084)	(0.276)
Age squared	0.972***	1.006	1.010
	(0.004)	(0.010)	(0.029)
Ideology			
Left-Right Distance	0.978*	1.050***	1.040
	(0.009)	(0.019)	(0.034)
Liberty-Authority Index	0.964***	0.960***	0.875***
	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.022)
Post-Materialism Index	1.101***	1.202***	1.126
	(0.022)	(0.049)	(0.099)
Clear views on EU	1.120***	1.213***	1.379**
	(0.036)	(0.073)	(0.179)
Marginality			
Majority % in 2010	0.982*	0.964*	1.041
	(0.009)	(0.019)	(0.043)
Political Party			
Conservative	0.899*	0.353***	0.425***
	(0.038)	(0.034)	(0.110)
Labour	0.840***	0.586***	1.121
	(0.030)	(0.047)	(0.221)
Lib Dem	0.769***	0.484***	0.397***
	(0.031)	(0.040)	(0.114)
UKIP	0.851***	0.536***	0.724
	(0.038)	(0.048)	(0.176)
Greens	0.735***	0.738***	0.532*
	(0.029)	(0.059)	(0.196)
Constant	2.176***	0.755	1.199
	(0.266)	(0.218)	(1.081)
Alpha†	0.186***	0.740***	1.266**
	(0.013)	(0.068)	(0.141)
Log Likelihood	-9974.32	-4574.82	-1344.74
McFadden Adjusted R2	0.016	0.044	0.064
Observations	5,071	4,763	1,120

Note: Incident-Rate Ratio (IRR) are displayed, S.e. in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

† Alpha is the over-dispersion parameter. If it is significant (as in this case), there is evidence that it is different from 0 and therefore that our data is over-dispersed, so a Negative Binomial model needs to be used rather than a Poisson model.